

Manitoba Education

Services for Students

Who Are Blind or
Visually Impaired



Healthy Child Manitoba
Putting children and families first

Manitoba 

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Available in alternate formats upon request.

This information is also available at
www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/blind/index.html.

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Introduction

Children learn in different ways, so each may have different educational needs. Students who are blind or visually impaired need learning opportunities that are appropriate for their needs, ages and school achievement levels.

Manitoba Education continues to strive to meet the educational needs of all students. The information in this guide will help Manitoba families and schools support students who are blind or visually impaired from Kindergarten through Grade 12.



Appropriate Educational Programming



Appropriate educational programming refers to school communities providing the learning environments, resources and services that meet the learning, social and emotional needs of all students. Parents*, teachers, administrators, specialist teachers and community members all want students to have the best education possible.

For more information on Manitoba's philosophy of inclusion, go to:

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/inclusion.html.

* The term "parents" refers to both parents and guardians, even if only one parent is involved in a child's education.

Registering for School

Prior to registering a child for school, call the student services administrator at your local school division office – a year in advance, if possible.

Student services administrators are individuals who co-ordinate student services for each school division. They support resource and classroom teachers. They are very knowledgeable about supports and services available to students.

Once a child is registered for school, parents become members of their child's student support team. Student support teams include people who contribute specific knowledge, skills and perspectives to the planning process. The number of team members varies, depending on the student's needs.

Children with visual impairments often receive services from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) in the preschool years, so CNIB may attend transition meetings between preschool and Kindergarten.

Planning for Individual Students

Student specific planning involves the student support team creating a plan to match the student's individual learning needs.

Decisions made by the student support team are documented in an Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is not a legal contract. It is a planning, record keeping and communication tool.



Manitoba Education Consultants for the Blind and Visually Impaired

A team of Manitoba Education consultants for the blind and visually impaired (BVI) works together with schools to provide support services to Manitoba students who are blind or visually impaired. The consultants for the BVI are teachers who have specialized training in teaching students who are visually impaired. Schools are responsible for educational programming and the consultants for the BVI provide ongoing support.

Services provided by the consultants for the BVI are determined through observations, assessments and by talking with parents and the student support team. They are based on a student's specific visual needs.

The consultants for the BVI:

- work with the student support team
- participate in the IEP process
- recommend and support the use of adaptations for learning activities in the classroom, gymnasium, on the playground, at home and in the community when appropriate
- provide workshops to school division staff, parents and post-secondary institutions



- provide information and resources about additional supports in the education system and the community
- participate in preschool transition and school leaving transition

The consultants for the BVI also teach specialized skills in:

- sensory development
- braille literacy
- concept development
- orientation and mobility
- effective use of residual vision
- assistive technology
- keyboarding and handwriting skills
- effective use of learning and listening skills
- daily living skills
- career education

Eligibility for Services

Students eligible for services have one or more of the following:

- corrected visual acuity of 20/70 or less
- less than 20 degrees of field of vision
- deteriorating eye condition

School teams can access BVI services through these steps:

- The school downloads and fills in both a referral form and an eye report form from www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/blind/viconsult/application.html. Parents need to sign both forms.
- Manitoba Education receives the referral and submits a request for a recent eye report to the child's eye doctor.
- Manitoba Education contacts the school to begin services.

Eligible students will be assigned to a consultant for the BVI. The consultant will conduct observations, assessments and communicate with parents and the student support team. This information will help the student support team in planning for that student.

Special Equipment

Special equipment may be needed to support a student's learning. Student equipment needs are determined by the consultant for the BVI, with input from the student support team. Then the consultant works with the school to get the recommended equipment.

Schools can borrow special equipment from Manitoba Education to support learning for students who are blind or visually impaired, based on the recommendation of the consultant for the BVI and equipment availability.

These items (ex: braille writer, closed-circuit television magnification system, computer access devices) are assistive devices not normally available in the classroom. Direct teaching may be available for students who use these devices.



Mr. Biggs went to look at the old bus. He looked at the engine.

"I can make it go again," he said.

"I'm good at fixing engines. I'll buy this old bus."

Mr. Biggs went to look at the old bus. He looked at the engine.



Web Resources



Appropriate Educational Programming

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/index.html

Student Services

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/index.html

Services for the Blind/Visually Impaired and for Students with Print Disabilities

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specædu/blind/index.html

Alternate Format Services

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/blind/afs/index.html

Guidelines for Early Childhood Transition to School for Children with Special Needs

www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/transition_protocol.html

A Protocol for Transitioning Students with Exceptional Needs from School to Community

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/transition/index.html

Preschool, Post-secondary and Community Supports

www.cnib.ca



